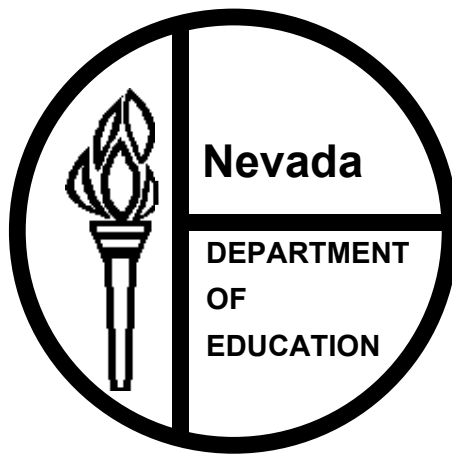


The Skills and Competencies Alternate Assessment of Nevada (SCAAN)



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SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT OF NEVADA (SCAAN)

In Nevada, *The Skills and Competencies Alternate Assessment of Nevada (SCAAN)* is the approved alternate assessment to the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program (NPEP). Fewer than 1% of all students in Nevada meet the strict criteria for participation in SCAAN outlined in the Guidelines for Participation in the Skills and Competencies Alternate Assessment of Nevada. The SCAAN is used in state reporting for federal accountability as the alternate to the Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT), the Norm-Referenced Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITBS/ITED), the State Analytic Writing Examination at Grades 4 and 8, and the Nevada High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE).

The determination of whether a student who is taking the SCAAN is proficient for the statewide administration of the CRT, as required for state and federal accountability reporting, is made based upon either (1) a measure of progress taking into account improvement in SCAAN scores from one year to the next, or (2) a measure of progress based upon IEP goals.

The requirements for student participation in the statewide alternate assessment are rigorous. The student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) Committee must determine, and the local school district is required to assure, that:

1. The student is receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through a current IEP.
2. The student demonstrates cognitive ability and adaptive behavior that limits FULL participation in the general education curriculum, even with supplementary aids, accommodations, and modifications.
3. The student's level of educational performance is not primarily the result of specific learning disabilities; social, cultural, economic, or language differences; visual or auditory impairments; emotional-behavioral disabilities; or excessive or extended absences unrelated to the student's disability.
4. The student requires intensive instruction in multiple settings to acquire, maintain, and generalize skills necessary for application in school, home, work, and community settings.
5. The student participates in modified, functional/academic curriculum that is not measured by general assessments.

What is SCAAN?

The SCAAN is a comprehensive measurement of academic (language arts, math) and functional domains (communications, for example). It is used for both summative

purposes, to determine proficiency and progress in academic subjects, and for formative purposes, for instructional planning. In all, over 800 skills and competencies can be assessed with the SCAAN, including 50 Core Essential Skills for academic subjects aligned to the *Nevada Standards and Performance Indicators*.

Measurement of skills/competencies on the SCAAN is completed through direct observation and use of a specific observation protocol and the collection of work samples and other forms of documentation related to each skill/competency observed and rated. Teachers using the SCAAN receive training to assure consistency of ratings using a specific rubric. At a minimum, three pieces of documentation must be collected for each skill/competency rated in the assessment. Such documentation establishes a baseline for the student for the year and can be rated by a second observer. Additional methods to ensure reliability are under development.

Reporting to Parents about Certain Implications of SCAAN Assessment

The consequences of access to standard curriculum, grade promotion, and high school graduation must be considered as the IEP Committee makes the determination about a student participating in the alternate assessment. The parent or guardian of the student must be advised that the SCAAN is a measurement based on alternate achievement standards and is therefore different from what is normally assessed using the other statewide tests. For example, the content of a Grade Four reading program is assessed using the CRT, while a student participating in the SCAAN in Grade Four is assessed based on the developmental level of the student utilizing the alternate achievement standards.

The SCAAN is required as an alternate to the HSPE for high school students, however the determination about proficiency based on these results cannot be substituted for a passing score on the HSPE. The HSPE is a high stakes assessment in which graduation from high school is contingent upon a student's ability to participate in and pass all subtests of the regular HSPE assessment under standard conditions. Students in Grade 10 participating in the SCAAN complete it as an alternate form to the HSPE and can attain an adjusted high school diploma. All students, including students with disabilities, are required to participate in the HSPE program beginning in Grade 10. All students with disabilities entering a school district in Grade 11 must provide evidence that they have participated in the HSPE program (or the SCAAN as the alternate) in Grade 10, or the student will be required to participate in SCAAN in Grade 11.

Students who progress to high levels of independence and proficiency on the SCAAN may no longer meet the criteria for SCAAN participation, based on a review by the student's IEP Committee. At this juncture, the student would reenter the general assessment and be assessed on grade-level academic content.

Reporting SCAAN results to parents and guardians of students with significant cognitive disabilities is an important obligation under the federal law. A standard summary form

explaining SCAAN results is currently being developed. Meanwhile, teachers of students participating in the SCAAN should review the need for the alternate assessment with parents, as outlined in the student's IEP, then include a written report of results to the parent in accord with the regular reporting periods specified in the IEP (usually quarterly progress reports). SCAAN results as reflected in the annual IEP should also be discussed in detail with the parents.

All Students Must Participate; All Students with IEPs Must Be Assessed

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the IEP Committee has authority to determine how a student will participate in the statewide assessment program. The IEP Committee may decide that a student with a disability will participate in the statewide assessment program in one of the following ways:

1. Under standard conditions using no accommodations or using accommodations that do not affect the validity of the assessment
2. Under non-standard conditions, using testing modifications which change or alter the content or administration of the assessment and invalidate the test result
3. Participate in the state's alternate assessment, the SCAAN

For the third option, review of the Guidelines for Participation in the Skills and Competencies Alternate Assessment of Nevada (described on p. 1) must be completed by the IEP Committee. There are no exceptions to the criteria outlined in this document.

Academic Progress and Proficiency

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the criteria set by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) relative to performance results and participation rates. The determination of AYP proficiency for students participating in the SCAAN will be assessed on an individual basis based on considerations of academic achievement in math and language arts and progress in participation. Instruction for SCAAN students must be aligned to the curriculum and the assessment.

The SCAAN Calendar

Administration of the SCAAN for the 2004-2005 School Year

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Alternate to</i>	<i>Time Period</i>	<i>State Reporting Date</i>
3-8, 10*	HSPE	August 30 – November 1	November 22, 2004
3-8, 10	CRT, ITBS/ITED, Analytic Writing (state)	January 15 – April 1	April 18, 2005

CRT = Criterion Referenced Test; ITBS = Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, ITED = Iowa Tests of Educational Development; HSPE = Nevada High School Proficiency Examination Program

* All students, including students with disabilities, are required to participate in the HSPE program beginning in Grade 10. All students with disabilities entering a school district in Grade 11 must provide evidence that they have participated in the HSPE program (or the SCAAN as the alternate) in Grade 10, or the student will be required to participate in SCAAN in Grade 11.

Grade levels 3-8 and Grade 10 must be reported to the NDE for the 2004-2005 school year for all students participating in the SCAAN. All Grades 3-8 and 10 must be reported. The report to the NDE is made by one designated administrator from each school district. The report to the NDE must include all required data fields. The determination as “Proficient” or “Not Proficient” must be included for each student.

The determination by NDE for proficiency for each student, including students participating in the SCAAN, is made immediately following the April 18, 2005, deadline. School districts via the designated administrator for SCAAN are responsible for verifying that scores are reported for every student indicated as taking the SCAAN as the alternate to the CRT.

School districts will vary in internal reporting procedures, but it is important to reconcile the list of students scheduled for alternate assessment with the list of students who actually complete the SCAAN. Materials to record school-level and district-level reports for SCAAN are available from the consultant for SCAAN or the NDE Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs. Automated procedures to report file tables for the SCAAN results are being developed.

Definition of Common Terms for SCAAN

Academic Content Standard: specifies what all students are expected to know and be able to do within grade-level content areas.

Academic Achievement Standard: establishes an expectation for how well students must perform on grade-level assessments to be considered proficient.

Alternate Content Standard: establishes an expectation of what students should be able to know and be able to do that differs in depth and complexity from the expectations for other students at a particular grade level.

Alternate Achievement Standard: an expectation of performance that differs in complexity from the grade-level achievement standard. The federal regulations note that a state is permitted to use alternate achievement standards to evaluate the performance of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and to use these standards in calculating the school, school district, and state AYP determination.

Alternate Assessment: assessment designed for the small number of students with disabilities who are unable to participate in the regular state assessment, even with appropriate accommodations. Further, the assessment must be aligned with the state's content standards, must yield results separately in both reading/language arts and mathematics, and must be implemented in a manner that supports use of the results as an indicator of AYP.

SCAAN Alternate Achievement Standard: an alternate standard for proficiency that is based on either 1) a measure of progress that takes into account improvement in SCAAN scores from one year to the next, or 2) a measure of progress based upon IEP goals.